

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

I The ^arecord of the genealogy of ^bJesus ^cthe Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

²Abraham ^awas the father of Isaac, ^bIsaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of ^cJudah and his brothers. ³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of ^aRam. ⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. ⁵Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon by ^aBathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of ^aAsa. ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of ^aJoram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah was the father of ^aJotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of ^aAmon, and Amon the father of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah became the father of ^aJeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of ^aShealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel was the father of ^aAbihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. ¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the

1:1 ^a Lit book ^b Heb Yeshua (Joshua), meaning *The LORD saves*
^c Gr *Christos* (Christ), Gr for *Messiah*, which means *Anointed One* 1:2 ^a Lit *fathered*, and throughout the genealogy ^b Lit *and...*, and throughout the genealogy ^c Gr *Judas*; names of people in the Old Testament are given in their Old Testament form 1:3 ^a Gr *Aram* 1:6 ^a Lit *her of Uriah* 1:7 ^a Gr *Asaph* 1:8 ^a Also Gr for *Jehoram* in 2 King 8:16; cf 1 Chron 3:11 1:9 ^a Gr *Joatham* 1:10 ^a Gr *Amos*
1:11 ^a *Jehoiachin* in 2 Kin 24:15 1:12 ^a Gr *Salathiel*
1:13 ^a Gr *Abioud*, usually spelled *Abiud*

MATTHEW

I The family tree of Jesus Christ, David's son, Abraham's son:

Abraham had Isaac,
Isaac had Jacob,
Jacob had Judah and his brothers,
Judah had Perez and Zerah (the mother was Tamar),
Perez had Hezron,
Hezron had Aram,
Aram had Amminadab,
Amminadab had Nahshon,
Nahshon had Salmon,
Salmon had Boaz (his mother was Rahab),
Boaz had Obed (Ruth was the mother),
Obed had Jesse,
Jesse had David,
and David became king.

David had Solomon (Uriah's wife was the mother),
Solomon had Rehoboam,
Rehoboam had Abijah,
Abijah had Asa,
Asa had Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat had Joram,
Joram had Uzziah,
Uzziah had Jotham,
Jotham had Ahaz,
Ahaz had Hezekiah,
Hezekiah had Manasseh,
Manasseh had Amon,
Amon had Josiah,
Josiah had Jehoiachin and his brothers,
and then the people were taken into the Babylonian exile.

When the Babylonian exile ended,
Jehoiachin had Shealtiel,
Shealtiel had Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel had Abiud,
Abiud had Eliakim,
Eliakim had Azor,
Azor had Zadok,
Zadok had Achim,
Achim had Eliud,

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father of Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called "the Messiah.

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to "the Messiah, fourteen generations.

CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF JESUS

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus "Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been ^b betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned ^a to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for ^a the Child who has been ^b conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for "He will save His people from their sins." ²²Now all this ^a took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME "IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." ²⁴And Joseph ^a awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, ²⁵^a but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, ^a magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king

1:16 ^a Gr *Christos* (*Christ*) 1:17 ^a Gr *Christos* (*Christ*)
1:18 ^a I.e. The Messiah ^b The first stage of marriage in Jewish culture, usually lasting for a year before the wedding night, more legal than an engagement 1:19 ^a Or to divorce her
1:20 ^a Lit that which ^b Lit begotten 1:21 ^a Lit He Himself
1:22 ^a Lit has happened 1:23 ^a Or Emmanuel 1:24 ^a Lit got up 1:25 ^a Lit and was not knowing her 2:1 ^a A caste of wise men specializing in astronomy, astrology, and natural science

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Eliud had Eleazar,
Eleazar had Matthan,
Matthan had Jacob,
Jacob had Joseph, Mary's husband,
the Mary who gave birth to Jesus,
the Jesus who was called Christ.

There were fourteen generations from Abraham to David,
another fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile,
and yet another fourteen from the Babylonian exile to Christ.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—"God saves"—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term:

Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son;
They will name him Emmanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").

Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

SCHOLARS FROM THE EAST

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he

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heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the ^aMessiah was to be born. ⁵They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written ^bby the prophet:

⁶ 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS
OF JUDAH;
FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' "

⁷Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them ^athe exact time the star appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." ⁹After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they ^afell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

¹³Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord ^aappeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."

¹⁴So ^aJoseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He ^aremained there until the death of Herod. *This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."*

HEROD SLAUGHTERS BABIES

¹⁶Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. ¹⁷Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

2:4 ^a Gr *Christos* (*Christ*) 2:5 ^a Or *through* 2:7 ^a Lit *the time of the appearing star* 2:11 ^a Lit *prostrated*; i.e. face down in a prone position to indicate worship 2:14 ^a Lit *he* 2:15 ^a Lit *was*

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was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,
no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my
Israel."

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.



After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him."

Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: "I called my son out of Egypt."

Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age from information he'd gotten from the scholars.) That's when Jeremiah's sermon was fulfilled:

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¹⁸ “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH,
 WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING,
 RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN;
 AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED,
 BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.”

¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord ^{*}appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” ²¹ So “Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, ²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

3 Now in those days John the Baptist ^{*}came, ^bpreaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven ^ais at hand.” ³ For this is the one referred to ^aby Isaiah the prophet when he said,

“THE VOICE OF ONE ^bCRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,

‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,
 MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’ ”

⁴ Now John himself had ^aa garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; ⁶ and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; ⁹ and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “As for me, I baptize you ^awith water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is might-

2:21 ^a Lit he 3:1 ^a Or arrived, or appeared ^b Or proclaiming as a herald 3:2 ^a Lit has come near 3:3 ^a Or through ^b Or shouting 3:4 ^a Lit his garment 3:11 ^a The Gr here can be translated in, with or by

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A sound was heard in Ramah,
 weeping and much lament.
 Rachel weeping for her children,
 Rachel refusing all solace,
 Her children gone,
 dead and buried.

Later, when Herod died, God’s angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: “Up, take the child and his mother and return to Israel. All those out to murder the child are dead.”

Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother, and reentered Israel. When he heard, though, that Archelaus had succeeded his father, Herod, as king in Judea, he was afraid to go there. But then Joseph was directed in a dream to go to the hills of Galilee. On arrival, he settled in the village of Nazareth. This move was a fulfillment of the prophetic words, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

THUNDER IN THE DESERT!

3 While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called “the Baptizer,” was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: “Change your life. God’s kingdom is here.”

John and his message were authorized by Isaiah’s prophecy:

Thunder in the desert!
 Prepare for God’s arrival!
 Make the road smooth and straight!

John dressed in a camel-hair habit tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life.

When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It’s your life that must change, not your skin! And don’t think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there. Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.

“I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action

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ier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you ^awith the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

¹³Then Jesus ^{*}arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” ¹⁵But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he ^{*}permitted Him. ¹⁶After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and ^ahe saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* ^blighting on Him, ¹⁷and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is ^aMy beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He ^athen became hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” ⁴But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’”

⁵Then the devil ^{*}took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and ^{*}said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU’;

and

‘ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’”

⁷Jesus said to him, ^a“On the other hand, it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

⁸Again, the devil ^{*}took Him to a very high mountain and ^{*}showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and ^aworship me.” ¹⁰Then Jesus ^{*}said to him,

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comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I’m a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he’ll put out with the trash to be burned.”



Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him. John objected, “I’m the one who needs to be baptized, not *you!*”

But Jesus insisted. “Do it. God’s work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism.” So John did it.

The moment Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters, the skies opened up and he saw God’s Spirit—it looked like a dove—descending and landing on him. And along with the Spirit, a voice: “This is my Son, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life.”

THE TEST

4 Next Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test. The Devil was ready to give it. Jesus prepared for the Test by fasting forty days and forty nights. That left him, of course, in a state of extreme hunger, which the Devil took advantage of in the first test: “Since you are God’s Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread.”

Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth.”

For the second test the Devil took him to the Holy City. He sat him on top of the Temple and said, “Since you are God’s Son, jump.” The Devil goaded him by quoting Psalm 91: “He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you so that you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone.”

Jesus countered with another citation from Deuteronomy: “Don’t you dare test the Lord your God.”

For the third test, the Devil took him on the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth’s kingdoms, how glorious they all were. Then he said, “They’re yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they’re yours.”

3:16 ^a Or He ^b Lit coming upon Him 3:17 ^a Or My Son, the Beloved 4:2 ^a Lit later became; or afterward became 4:7 ^a Lit Again 4:9 ^a Lit prostrate Yourself

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“Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND “SERVE HIM ONLY.’”¹¹ Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴*This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:*

¹⁵“THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI,
“BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN,
GALILEE OF THE ^bGENTILES—

¹⁶“THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS
SAW A GREAT LIGHT,
AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND
AND SHADOW OF DEATH,
UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to *“preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

¹⁸Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And He *said to them, *“aFollow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. ²¹Going on from there He saw two other brothers, *aJames the son of Zebedee, and bJohn his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.* ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

MINISTRY IN GALILEE

²³Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the *“gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.*

²⁴The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, *aepileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.* ²⁵Large crowds followed Him from Galilee

4:10 ^a Or *fulfill religious duty to Him* 4:15 ^a Or *Toward the sea* ^b Lit *nations, usually non-Jewish* 4:17 ^a Or *proclaim* 4:19 ^a Lit *Come here after Me* 4:21 ^a Or *Jacob; James is the Eng form of Jacob* ^b Gr *Joannes, Heb Johanan* 4:23 ^a Or *good news* 4:24 ^a Lit *moonstruck*

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Jesus' refusal was curt: "Beat it, Satan!" He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God, and only him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

The Test was over. The Devil left. And in his place, angels! Angels came and took care of Jesus' needs.

TEACHING AND HEALING

When Jesus got word that John had been arrested, he returned to Galilee. He moved from his hometown, Nazareth, to the lakeside village Capernaum, nestled at the base of the Zebulun and Naphtali hills. This move completed Isaiah's sermon:

Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
road to the sea, over Jordan,
Galilee, crossroads for the nations.
People sitting out their lives in the dark
saw a huge light;
Sitting in that dark, dark country of death,
they watched the sun come up.

This Isaiah-prophesied sermon came to life in Galilee the moment Jesus started preaching. He picked up where John left off: "Change your life. God's kingdom is here."

Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." They didn't ask questions, but simply dropped their nets and followed.

A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers, James and John, Zebedee's sons. These two were sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their fishnets. Jesus made the same offer to them, and they were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.

From there he went all over Galilee. He used synagogues for meeting places and taught people the truth of God. God's kingdom was his theme—that beginning right now they were under God's government, a good government! He also healed people of their diseases and of the bad effects of their bad lives. Word got around the entire Roman province of Syria. People brought anybody with an ailment, whether mental, emotional, or physical. Jesus healed them, one and all. More and more people came, the momentum gathering. Besides those from Galilee, crowds came from the

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and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT; THE BEATITUDES

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the ^amountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ²He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

³^aBlessed are the ^bpoor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the ^agentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

DISCIPLES AND THE WORLD

¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how ^acan it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a

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"Ten Towns" across the lake, others up from Jerusalem and Judea, still others from across the Jordan.

YOU'RE BLESSED

5 When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

SALT AND LIGHT

"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.

5:1 ^a Or hill 5:3 ^a I.e. fortunate or prosperous, and so through v 11 ^b I.e. those who are not spiritually arrogant
5:5 ^a Or humble, meek 5:13 ^a Lit will

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hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a ^abasket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not ^athe smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches ^aothers to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever ^bkeeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

²¹“You have heard that ^athe ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be ^bliable to the court.’ ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be ^aguilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ^b‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be ^aguilty before ^cthe supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be ^aguilty enough to go into the ^dfiery hell. ²³Therefore if you are presenting your ^aoffering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your ^aoffering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your ^aoffering. ²⁵Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last ^acent.

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; ²⁸but I say to you that

5:14 ^a Or mountain 5:15 ^a Or peck-measure 5:18 ^a Lit one iota (Heb yodh) or one projection of a letter (serif)
5:19 ^a Gr anthropoi ^b Lit does 5:21 ^a Lit it was said to the ancients ^b Or guilty before 5:22 ^a Or liable to ^b Or empty-head; Gr Raka (Raca) fr Aram reqa ^c Lit the Sanhedrin ^d Lit Gehenna of fire 5:23 ^a Or gift 5:24 ^a Or gift 5:26 ^a Lit quadrans (equaling two mites); i.e. 1/64 of a daily wage

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God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

COMPLETING GOD'S LAW

“Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God's Law or the Prophets. I'm not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working.

“Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom. Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won't know the first thing about entering the kingdom.

MURDER

“You're familiar with the command to the ancients, ‘Do not murder.’ I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘idiot!’ and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid!’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.

“This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.

“Or say you're out on the street and an old enemy accosts you. Don't lose a minute. Make the first move; make things right with him. After all, if you leave the first move to him, knowing his track record, you're likely to end up in court, maybe even jail. If that happens, you won't get out without a stiff fine.

ADULTERY AND DIVORCE

“You know the next commandment pretty well, too: ‘Don't go to bed with another's spouse.’ But

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everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye makes you ^astumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^bto lose one of the parts of your body, ^cthan for your whole body to be thrown into ^dhell. ³⁰If your right hand makes you ^astumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^bto lose one of the parts of your body, ^cthan for your whole body to go into ^dhell.

³¹“It was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; ³²but I say to you that everyone who ^adivorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a ^bdivorced woman commits adultery.

³³“Again, you have heard that ^athe ancients were told, ^bYOU SHALL NOT ^cMAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR ^dVOWS TO THE LORD.’ ³⁴But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or ^aby Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. ³⁶Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is ^aof evil.

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you and take your ^ashirt, let him have your ^bcoat also. ⁴¹Whoever ^aforces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those

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don't think you've preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your *heart* can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your *body*. Those leering looks you think nobody notices—they also corrupt.

“Let's not pretend this is easier than it really is. If you want to live a morally pure life, here's what you have to do: You have to blind your right eye the moment you catch it in a lustful leer. You have to choose to live one-eyed or else be dumped on a moral trash pile. And you have to chop off your right hand the moment you notice it raised threateningly. Better a bloody stump than your entire being discarded for good in the dump.

“Remember the Scripture that says, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him do it legally, giving her divorce papers and her legal rights’? Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are ‘legal.’ Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you're responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you're automatically an adulterer yourself. You can't use legal cover to mask a moral failure.

EMPTY PROMISES

“And don't say anything you don't mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk, saying, ‘I'll pray for you,’ and never doing it, or saying, ‘God be with you,’ and not meaning it. You don't make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

“Here's another old saying that deserves a second look: ‘Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.’ Is that going to get us anywhere? Here's what I propose: ‘Don't hit back at all.’ If someone strikes you, stand there and take it. If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

“You're familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a

5:29 ^aI.e. sin ^bLit that one...be lost ^cLit not your whole body ^dGr Gehenna 5:30 ^aI.e. sin ^bLit that one...be lost ^cLit not your whole body ^dGr Gehenna 5:32 ^aOr sends away ^bOr sent away 5:33 ^aLit it was said to the ancients ^byou and your are singular here ^cOr break your vows ^dLit oaths 5:35 ^aOr toward 5:37 ^aOr from the evil one 5:40 ^aLit tunic; i.e. a garment worn next to the body ^bLit cloak; i.e. an outer garment 5:41 ^aLit will force

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who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may ^abe sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the evil and the good*, and sends rain on *the righteous and the unrighteous*. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Therefore ^ayou are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

GIVING TO THE POOR AND PRAYER

6 ^a“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

²“So when you ^agive to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³But when you ^agive to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your ^agiving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

⁵“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners ^aso that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ⁶But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

⁷“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

⁹“Pray, then, in this way:
 ‘Our Father who is in heaven,
 Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ ‘Your kingdom come.
 Your will be done,

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hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.

“In a word, what I’m saying is, *Grow up*. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.

THE WORLD IS NOT A STAGE

6 “Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don’t make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won’t be applauding.

“When you do something for someone else, don’t call attention to yourself. You’ve seen them in action, I’m sure—‘playactors’ I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that’s all they get. When you help someone out, don’t think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

PRAY WITH SIMPLICITY

“And when you come before God, don’t turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

“Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

“The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven,
 Reveal who you are.
 Set the world right;
 Do what’s best—

5:45 ^a Or *show yourselves to be* 5:48 ^a Lit *you shall be*
 6:2 ^a Or *give alms* 6:3 ^a Or *give alms* 6:4 ^a Or *alms*
 6:5 ^a Lit *to be apparent to men*